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Copyright Royalty Board

37 CFR Part 381

[Docket No. 21-CRB-0002-PBR (2023-2027)]

Determination of Rates and Terms for Public Broadcasting (PB IV)

AGENCY: Copyright Royalty Board, Library of Congress.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: The Copyright Royalty Judges publish for comment proposed regulations that set rates and terms for the use of certain copyrighted works by certain public broadcasting entities for the period beginning January 1, 2023, and ending December 31, 2027.

DATES: Comments and objections, if any, are due no later than [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE **FEDERAL REGISTER**].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, identified by docket number 21-CRB-0002-PBR (2023-2027), online through eCRB at <https://app.crb.gov>.

Instructions: To send your comment through eCRB, if you do not have a user account, you will first need to register for an account and wait for your registration to be approved. Approval of user accounts is only available during business hours. Once you have an approved account, you can only sign in and file your comment after setting up multi-factor authentication, which can be done at any time of day. All comments must include the Copyright Royalty Board name and the docket number for this proposed rule. All properly filed comments will appear without change in eCRB at <https://app.crb.gov>, including any personal information provided.

Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents or comments received, go to eCRB at <https://app.crb.gov> and perform a case search for docket 21-CRB-0002-PBR (2023-2027).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Anita Blaine, CRB Program Specialist, at 202-707-7658 or crb@loc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 118 of the Copyright Act, title 17 of the United States Code, establishes a statutory license for the use of certain copyrighted works in connection with noncommercial television and radio broadcasting. Chapter 8 of the Copyright Act requires the Copyright Royalty Judges (“Judges”) to conduct proceedings every five years to determine the rates and terms for the section 118 license. 17 U.S.C. 801(b)(1), 804(b)(6). Accordingly, the Judges commenced a proceeding in January 2021, by publishing notice of the commencement of the proceeding and a request that interested parties submit petitions to participate. 86 FR 325 (Jan. 5, 2021).

The Judges received petitions to participate in the current proceeding from The American Society of Authors, Composers and Publishers (ASCAP); Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI); Church Music Publishers’ Association, Inc. (CMPA); Educational Media Foundation (EMF); Global Music Rights, LLC; National Religious Broadcasters Noncommercial Music License Committee (NRBNMLC); David Powell; Public Broadcasting Entities (Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), National Public Radio (NPR), and Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)); SESAC Performing Rights, LLC (SESAC); and The Harry Fox Agency LLC (HFA).

The Judges gave notice to all participants of the three-month negotiation period required by 17 U.S.C. 803(b)(3) and directed that, if the participants were unable to negotiate a settlement, they should submit Written Direct Statements no later than September 10, 2021.

Notice of Participants, Commencement of Voluntary Negotiation Period, and Case Scheduling Order (Feb. 9, 2021).

There are two ways copyright owners and public broadcasting entities¹ may negotiate rates and terms under the section 118 statutory license. First, copyright owners may negotiate rates and terms with specific public broadcasting entities for the use of all of the copyright owners' works covered by the license. Section 118(b)(2) provides that such license agreements "shall be given effect in lieu of any determination by the . . . Copyright Royalty Judges," provided that copies of the agreement are submitted to the Judges "within 30 days of execution." 17 U.S.C. 118(b)(2).

Second, copyright owners and public broadcasting entities may negotiate rates and terms for categories of copyrighted works and uses that would be binding on all owners and entities using the same license and submit them to the Judges for approval. Section 801(b)(7)(A) of the Copyright Act authorizes the Judges to adopt rates and terms negotiated by "some or all of the participants in a proceeding at any time during the proceeding" provided they are submitted to the Judges for approval.

This section provides that the Judges shall provide notice and an opportunity to comment on the agreement to (1) those that would be bound by the terms, rates, or other determination set by the agreement and (2) participants in the proceeding that would be bound by the terms, rates, or other determination set by the agreement. *See* section 801(b)(7)(A). The Judges may decline to adopt the agreement as a basis for statutory terms and rates for participants not party to the agreement if any *participant* objects and the Judges conclude that the agreement does not provide a reasonable basis for setting statutory terms or rates. *Id.*

¹ A "public broadcasting entity" is defined as a "noncommercial educational broadcast station as defined in section 397 of title 47 and any nonprofit institution or organization engaged in the activities described in paragraph (2) of subsection (c)" of section 118. 17 U.S.C. 118(f).

On May 17, 2021, the Judges received a proposal from participant BMI regarding “statutory license fees to be paid to BMI by noncommercial educational radio broadcast stations licensed to colleges or universities that are not affiliated with [NPR] for the performance of copyrighted musical works in BMI’s repertory” for the years 2023 through 2027. Proposal of Broadcast Music, Inc. of Rates and Terms for Colleges and Universities at 1 (May 17, 2021) (Proposal). No college radio station or related entity filed a petition to participate in the proceeding, but the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) and the American Council on Education (ACE) support BMI’s proposal. Proposal at 4.

The Proposal states that the fees in § 381.5(c)(2)(i) should be modified. *See Id.* at 3-4. The modified fees reflect “an annual cost-of-living increase based on CPI, reflecting how increases were calculated in the joint proposals submitted by BMI and ACE . . . and by BMI and NACUBO” in prior proceedings. *Id.* at 4.

The Judges solicit comments on whether they should adopt the proposed regulations as statutory license fees to be paid by certain public broadcasting entities, namely, noncommercial educational radio stations licensed to colleges or universities that are not members of NPR, for their performances of copyrighted musical works in BMI’s repertory, pursuant to 17 U.S.C. 118.

Comments and objections regarding the proposed changes must be submitted no later than [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE **FEDERAL REGISTER**].

List of Subjects in 37 CFR Part 381

Copyright, Music, Radio, Television, Rates.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, the Copyright Royalty Judges propose to amend 37 CFR part 381 as follows:

PART 381—USE OF CERTAIN COPYRIGHTED WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH
NONCOMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTING

1. The authority citation for part 381 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 17 U.S.C. 118, 801(b)(1), 803.

2. Revise § 381.5(c)(2)(i) to read as follows:

**§ 381.5 Performance of musical compositions by public broadcasting entities licensed
to colleges and universities.**

* * * * *

(c) * * *

(2) For all such compositions in the repertory of BMI, the royalty rates shall be as
follows:

(i) *Music fees.*

	Number of full-time students	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Level 1	<1,000	\$390	\$400	\$410	\$421	\$432
Level 2	1,000-4,999	451	463	475	487	500
Level 3	5,000-9,999	619	635	652	669	686
Level 4	10,000-19,999	801	822	843	865	887
Level 5	20,000+	1,009	1,035	1,062	1,090	1,118

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Dated June 24, 2021.

Jesse M. Feder,
Chief Copyright Royalty Judge.
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